

We want to enable them to be able to secure their own destiny. We want to leave that country other than providing the basic support they may need on an ongoing basis.

Secondly, the terror, if you will, al-Qaida and some of the other militant groups have wreaked on these villages has caused them to want to band together with us and again try to make sure they do everything they can to cause their villages to be peaceful. For that reason, we no doubt are seeing gains on the ground as it relates to security.

I think the third thing we would all agree with is the central Government itself has not made the gains we would have hoped more security on the ground would have enabled them to do. I think most delegations that went there met with various Iraqi officials. I know I met with both a Shia and a Sunni deputy president there on the ground and talked with them about the lack of benchmarks we had hoped they would all meet.

Obviously, we also are aware the Prime Minister is meeting with the President and two deputy presidents on a daily basis to try to reach some type of reconciliation so they can move forward on these important issues. But the fact is, those benchmarks have not been made in a way that we here in the Government would like to have seen them approached and progress made.

Our soldiers have been outstanding. There is no doubt that military gains on the ground have occurred, and the central Government has not conducted itself in a way that we would have liked to have seen happen.

In the next week or so we are going to see a number of reports, but most important, obviously, to me anyway, is the report General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will put forward. I urge my fellow Senators on the floor to listen to what is going to be said. Obviously, there are people here who have a lot invested in various amendments or proposals, and there is a human trait we want to see our own proposal, if you will, be the one people in the Senate and our country adopt.

But let me state I do not think there is any question that the Petraeus plan is going to discuss redeployments. It is going to discuss bringing men and women home from Iraq based on the successes we have had on the ground in recent months. I do not think there is any question we have seen a change in mission take place on a province-by-province basis. In other words, one of the things we debated heavily in previous debates this year on Iraq was changing the mission of our men and women in uniform. Yet we are seeing this occurring province by province, as tribal leaders are able, working with our military leaders, to take the lead in their own security. So we are seeing that change in mission.

I say to my fellow Senators, let's listen. I think we have an opportunity in the Senate for Democrats and Repub-

licans to come together around a plan that would unify our country in such a way as we are able to bring our country together around what is happening in Iraq. I do not know what the details of the Petraeus plan will be. My guess is he and others today are actually calibrating what the exact redeployment ought to be and what the timing of that ought to be to actually make sure we do not lose the successes we have had on the ground. But my guess is, there will be redeployments, and I think those will be gradual, again, to build on the successes we have had—again, a continual and gradual change in the mission underway in Iraq.

I am of hope, of great hope—and maybe it is my newness to the Senate that gives me this optimism still, but I have great hopes that if we will all listen to the reports that are being given, and not to those people who wish to see us divided, I think we in the Senate have an opportunity to come together around a proposal in Iraq that gives us the opportunity to build on the successes we have had and to change the mission of our men and women so over time what we are doing is basically supporting the operations of the Iraqis as they continue their move ahead, hopefully, toward a more secure Iraq.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 2642, which the clerk will report by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2642) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I believe the Senator from Arizona has a request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Arizona, who has given up his 10 minutes in morning business, be allowed to speak between 2:20 and 2:30 this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2656

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on behalf of the Appropriations Committee, I call up an amendment in the form of a committee substitute which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED] proposes an amendment numbered 2656.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am pleased to bring the fiscal year 2008 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and related agencies appropriations bill to the Senate. This is a unique bill for many reasons, not the least of which is it is the first appropriations bill that will be considered under the requirements of S. 1, the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007. On August 2, 2007, the Senate approved S. 1 by a vote of 83 to 14, clearing the measure for the President's signature. When signed by the President, this ethics reform legislation will significantly improve the transparency and accountability of the legislative process.

Although the White House has requested the Senate not submit the legislation to the President until he returns from his overseas travels, I wish to assure Senators we intend to abide by the requirements of S. 1 during the consideration of this bill. The legislation requires that the chairman of the committee of jurisdiction certify that certain information related to congressionally directed spending be identified and that the required information be available on a publicly accessible congressional Web site in a searchable format at least 48 hours before a vote on the pending bill.

The information required includes identification of the congressionally directed spending and the name of the Senator who requested such spending. This information is contained in the committee report numbered 110-85, dated June 18, 2007, and has been available on the Internet for over 2 months.

In addition, pursuant to the standards required by Chairman BYRD and Senator COCHRAN, letters from each Member with a congressionally directed spending item in this bill or accompanying report are available on the Internet certifying that neither the Senator, nor his or her spouse, has a pecuniary interest in such spending item.

I am submitting for the RECORD the certification by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: